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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 09/26/08

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Mainichi:

- (1) Investigation into tainted rice resale: Expose corruption in agricultural administration
- (2) Deployment of nuclear-powered aircraft carrier: Both Japanese and U.S. governments should take every possible measure to ensure safety

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- (2) Investigation into resale of tainted rice: Stem irregularities involving food, by introducing severe punishments

Nikkei:

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- (1) Removal of seals on nuclear equipment: Do not allow North Korea to shake six-party talks
- (2) Investigation into resale of tainted rice: Necessary to ferret out government responsibility

Tokyo Shimbun:

- (1) Public medical services for elderly people aged 75 or older: Lip service for revision not acceptable
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Akahata:

- (1) Revision to Worker Dispatch Law: Drastic reform needed to top treating temporary workers as goods

3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, September 25

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
September 26, 2008

01:31

Posed for a ceremonial photo with cabinet members at the Kantei.
Issued official appointments to Cabinet Intelligence Director Mitani
and others.

02:06

Arrived at his private residence in Kamiyama-cho.

07:52

Took a walk around his residence.

10:23

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Called at the residences of Prince Hitachi, Prince Takamado, Prince
Mikasa, Prince Tomohito, and Prince Akishino to sign a book in
commemoration of the assumption of the premiership. Later paid a
courtesy call on the Crown Prince at the temporary Crown Prince's
Palace. Then signed his name at the residence of Prince Katsura.

11:41

Met Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Uruma at the Kantei, joined by
Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura. Joined by Deputy Chief Cabinet
Secretary Matsumoto. Kawamura and Matsumoto stayed behind. Joined by
Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Konoike.

12:58

Met Financial Services Agency Director General Sato and Vice
Minister of Finance for International Affairs Shinohara.

14:21

Left Haneda Airport by a government plane to attend the UN General
Assembly.

4) Poll: 49.5 PERCENT back Aso cabinet

YOMIURI (Top Play) (Excerpts)
September 26, 2008

In a Yomiuri Shimbun poll, 49.5 PERCENT support the newly
inaugurated cabinet of Prime Minister Taro Aso, while 33.4 PERCENT
disapproved of it. The support rate was less than the 57.5 PERCENT
recorded immediately after the inauguration of the first cabinet of
former Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda. Asked to choose between Aso or
Democratic Party of Japan President Ichiro Ozawa as the next
premier, 54 PERCENT said they preferred Aso, while 26 PERCENT
picked Ozawa. Asked which party they planned to vote for in the
proportional representation segment in the next House of
Representatives election, 37 PERCENT chose the LDP while 30 PERCENT
picked the DPJ. These figures suggest Aso's personal popularity is
not necessarily being reflected in his party's popularity among
voters.

In the nationwide telephone opinion poll conducted from the night of
Sept. 24 through the 25th, 37.4 PERCENT expressed support for the
LDP, while 22.8 PERCENT backed the DPJ. The support rates of the
two parties declined from a survey conducted right after the LDP
presidential election was announced. The figures at that time were
43.4 PERCENT for the LDP and 26.3 PERCENT for the DPJ.

5) Poll: Aso cabinet's support rate at 48 PERCENT

ASAHI (Top play) (Abridged)
September 26, 2008

In the wake of the Aso cabinet's inauguration, the Asahi Shimbun
conducted a telephone-based spot nationwide public opinion survey,
in which the cabinet support rate was 48 PERCENT and the nonsupport
rate was 36 PERCENT. The support rate markedly rebounded as
compared with the Fukuda cabinet's low approval ratings around 20

PERCENT . However, it was lower than the Abe cabinet's 63 PERCENT popularity rating upon its inauguration in September 2006 and lower than the Fukuda cabinet's inaugural rating at 53 PERCENT in September 2007.

In the survey, respondents were also asked which political party

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they would vote for if they were to vote now in their proportional representation blocs. In this voter preference, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party scored 36 PERCENT (28 PERCENT in a previous survey taken Sept. 2-3), with the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) at 32 PERCENT (leveling off from 32 PERCENT in the Sept. 2-3 survey). This question has been asked from time to time since December last year, and the LDP outstripped the DPJ for the first time. Among floating voters with no particular party affiliation, however, the DPJ was still higher than the LDP, respectively at 27 PERCENT and 17 PERCENT .

In the breakdown of public support for political parties, the LDP stood at 34 PERCENT , rising from 29 PERCENT in the last survey taken Sept. 10-11. The DPJ was at 23 PERCENT (19 PERCENT in the last survey).

6) Support rate for Aso cabinet at 53 PERCENT

NIKKEI (Top Play)
September 26, 2008

An emergency poll conducted by the Nihon Keizai Shimbun and TV Tokyo found that the support rate for the Aso cabinet came to 53 PERCENT . The figure is up 24 points compared with the previous poll carried out in late August in the closing days of the Fukuda administration. However, it fell short of the 71 PERCENT recorded just after the Abe cabinet's inauguration and the 59 PERCENT logged just after the Fukuda cabinet's inauguration. The nonsupport rate for the Aso cabinet was 40 PERCENT , exceeding that of the Fukuda administration just after its inauguration by 13 points. The LDP and the DPJ were evenly matched regarding voter party preference for proportional representation in the upcoming Lower House election, with the LDP supported by 36 PERCENT , while the DPJ supported by 33 PERCENT .

The poll also found that the support rate for the LDP rose to 41 PERCENT , up 4 points from the previous poll, while support for the DPJ increased to 31 PERCENT , up 1 point. This is the first time since March this year that the difference in approval rates for the two parties reached 10 points.

The survey, which targeted adults throughout the nation, was conducted on the phone by Nikkei Research, based on the random digit dialing (RDD) method. Among 1,331 households that have voters as family members, 788 households responded. The rate of respondents came to 59.2 PERCENT .

7) Poll: Approval rate for Aso cabinet stands at 45 PERCENT , 12-point drop from previous cabinet at launch

MAINICHI (Top play) (Lead paragraph)
September 26, 2008

The Mainichi Shimbun conducted a nationwide telephone poll on Sept. 24-25 on the newly inaugurated cabinet of Prime Minister Taro Aso. The survey has found that 45 PERCENT of respondents supported the Aso cabinet. The 45 PERCENT is a 12-point drop from that of the poll carried out last September when the Fukuda cabinet was inaugurated. Asked which party -- either the ruling Liberal Democratic Party or the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan -- they wanted to win in the next House of Representatives election, 41 PERCENT said they wanted the LDP to win, while 37 PERCENT chose the DPJ. It was the first time for the LDP's support rate to exceed

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the DPJ's in the 13 polls the newspaper has conducted since last August. As the ruling coalition takes the 45 PERCENT favorably,

moves for an early dissolution of the Lower House and general election will likely be accelerated.

8) Aso cabinet support rate stands at 48 PERCENT in nationwide telephone survey, falling below approval rate for Fukuda cabinet just after inauguration

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Top Play) (Excerpts)
September 26, 2008

Following the launch of the Aso cabinet, Kyodo News Agency conducted a nationwide emergency telephone poll from the evening of September 24 through the 25th. The poll found that the support rate for the cabinet came to 48.6 PERCENT, falling below the 57.8 PERCENT for the Fukuda cabinet just after its inauguration in September last year. The rate is low for a newly launched cabinet. The nonsupport rate was 32.9 PERCENT.

Regarding voter preference for proportional representation in the next Lower House election, the LDP was supported by 34.5 PERCENT of respondents, down 3.5 points from the previous poll carried out early this month, while the DPJ gained support from 34.8 PERCENT, down 0.1 PERCENT. To a question "Which -- Prime Minister Taro Aso or DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa -- is appropriate as the next prime minister?" 53.9 PERCENT supported Aso, while 29.4 PERCENT cited Ozawa.

As a desirable framework for the next administration, the LDP and DPJ traded places, with those who said "an administration led by the LDP" standing at 38.1 PERCENT, down 5.2 PERCENT from the previous poll, and those who replied "an administration led by the DPJ" coming to 43.8 PERCENT, up 2.1 points. The outcome of the poll indicated a division in expectations for the next administration, party heads and parties.

Regarding support rates for political parties, 37.0 PERCENT supported the LDP, up 0.2 points, while 28.3 PERCENT, up 1.3 points, supported the DPJ. The New Komeito was supported by 4.7 PERCENT, the Japanese Communist Party by 2.4 PERCENT, the Social Democratic Party by 1.2 PERCENT, the People's New Party by 0.3 PERCENT and the New Party Nippon by 0.2 PERCENT. The rate of respondents who have no party to support stood at 23.1 PERCENT.

9) Aso to announce continued refueling mission in UN speech

SANKEI (Page 1) (Excerpts)
September 26, 2008

Prime Minister Taro Aso departed by government plane for New York yesterday to attend the 63rd UN General Assembly. He is scheduled to deliver a speech on the evening of Sept. 25 (early morning of Sept. 26, Japan time) in which he will express his resolve to continue contributing to the war on terror in Afghanistan and highlight the need to reform the UN Security Council at an early time.

In the speech, the prime minister will play up Japan's assistance for the reconstruction of Afghanistan and the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, saying that the international community must continue fighting terrorism. He will also effectively announce the continuation of the refueling mission

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as part of the country's contributions, saying that Japan will remain an active player in the war on terror as a member of the international community.

He will also criticize North Korea's negative attitude toward reinvestigating the fate of Japanese abductees, including Megumi Yokota, and abandoning its nuclear program, saying that Japan is ready to move relations with the DPRK forward by settling outstanding bilateral issues and addressing the unfortunate past depending on how the North acts.

Aso will be the first Japanese prime minister to address the UN General Assembly since former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi did so in 2005.

10) Prime Minister Aso's UN speech

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
September 26, 2008

Gist of Prime Minister Aso's speech to be delivered on the evening of September 25 (early hours of the 26th, Japan time) in the fall session of the UN General Assembly.

Japan during the Tokyo International Conference held in May this year called for aid to Africa aimed to accelerate its economic growth.

An agreement was reached at the Hokkaido Lake Toya Summit (G-8) in July to create under the UN an effective framework for combating climate change that will aim to adopt a long-term goal to be achieved by the whole world.

Japan can contribute to the global economy by growing its own economy.

There is a diplomatic contribution that only Japan can make. It will become a broker for building confidence, by providing irrigation technology for the development of the West Bank of the Jordan River. Japan will submit a resolution calling for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Japan has put much effort into assistance for the reconstruction of Afghanistan and continued refueling operations in the Indian Ocean. It will continue its proactive participation in the war on terror along with the international community.

Though North Korea has pledged to investigate the whereabouts of victims kidnapped by North Korean agents, it failed to deliver on it. Japan is ready to promote Japan-North Korea relations in response to North Korea's action. It will urge North Korea to abandon its nuclear program through the six-party framework.

China and South Korea are Japan's important partners. Japan will also move promote cooperation with those two countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). It will endeavor to strengthen ties with its neighbors, while regarding the Japan-U.S. alliance as an unchangeable linchpin.

Japan will place emphasis on the UN. It will fall in line with

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countries that share basic value with Japan.

Reform of the UNSC in terms of increasing seats both for permanent and nonpermanent council members must be realized at an early time. Japan will file its candidacy to be a nonpermanent member. I would like to solicit your support.

11) Aso attends UN meeting with next general election in mind

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 9) (Full)
September 26, 2008

Commentary

By Kei Sato, Political News Department, New York

Prime Minister Aso Taro decided to deliver a speech to the UN General Assembly as his first political event after assuming office apparently to demonstrate his diplomatic caliber with a Lower House dissolution for a snap general election in mind.

Aso, who is fluent in English and served as foreign minister, takes pride in diplomacy. For Aso, who favors flashy stages, the UN General Assembly presents the perfect venue to make his diplomatic debut. It will help him outmaneuver DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa, who advocates UN-centered diplomacy.

In fact, the government and ruling coalition made extra efforts in adjusting the timetable for such events as the LDP presidential race and the extra Diet session even during the LDP race on the assumption that a Prime Minister Aso would attend the UN General Assembly.

But a path to economic recovery to be announced in Aso's UN speech as an international pledge remains unclear. Regarding the refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, as well, there are no prospects, as the DPJ has not shown any signs of changing its opposition.

If the DPJ accuses Aso of making empty promises at the UN General Assembly during the ongoing extraordinary Diet session, the prime minister's attendance at the event might have a negative impact on the next Lower House election.

12) USS George Washington arrives at Yokosuka

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
September 26, 2008

The nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS George Washington arrived yesterday at its new home port of Yokosuka Naval Base in Yokosuka, Kanagawa Prefecture, becoming the fourth aircraft carrier at the U.S. naval base in the city since the Midway in 1973. Although U.S. nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and submarines have called at ports in Japan, it is the first time (for a U.S. nuclear-powered aircraft carrier) to be deployed in Japan. The USS George Washington, which is the only one nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to be home-ported outside the United States out of the 10 nuclear-powered flattops possessed by the U.S. Navy, belongs to the Seventh Fleet, whose remit encompasses East Asia to the Indian Ocean. In addition to being prepared for contingencies on the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait, the vessel is expected to serve actively in unstable areas, such as Afghanistan and Iraq.

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13) Former Prime Minister Koizumi to retire from politics

SANKEI (Top play) (Lead paragraph)
September 26, 2008

Former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, 66, yesterday conveyed his intention to retire from politics without running in the next House of Representatives election, to former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori and other ruling Liberal Democratic Party officials. As his successor, his second son, the 27-year-old Shinjiro Koizumi, will likely run for the next Lower House race from his father's Kanagawa No. 11 constituency (in Miura City, Kanagawa Prefecture). The former prime minister plans to explain his decision to his supporters in Kanagawa on Sept. 27. During his premiership from April 2001 through September 2005, Koizumi pushed ahead with his structural reform initiative, including postal privatization. He served in office for 1,980 days, making him the third-longest serving prime minister in the postwar period. The planned retirement of Koizumi is shocking the so-called Koizumi children, who were elected in the 2005 Lower House election for the first time to the Diet. Koizumi's retirement will also likely have an impact on the general election.

14) Three opposition parties suggest deciding date of Lower House dissolution through talks

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Excerpts)
September 26, 2008

The Diet Affairs Committee chairmen of ruling and opposition parties conferred on how to treat a fiscal 2008 supplementary budget bill in the Diet Building yesterday. The Democratic Party of Japan, the Social Democratic Party, and the People's New Party formally presented a plan to respond to a vote on the bill in the House of Councillors if the ruling coalition agrees to hold deliberations for two days in both Houses of the Diet. The ruling side just replied it will look into it. Whether they should accept the proposal or not will be discussed in the ruling camp from now.

15) Nakayama to be named special advisor on abduction issue

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
September 26, 2008

Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura announced yesterday at a press conference that former State Minister for the Abduction Issue Kyoko Nakayama would be appointed as special advisor to the prime minister on the abduction issue. The aim is to show the government's stand of placing importance on dealing with the issue of North Korea's abductions of Japanese nationals. Her appointment will be formally decided in a cabinet meeting today.

16) Japan, U.S. to introduce new system to simultaneously grant patents filed in both countries

NIKKEI (Page 5) (Full)
September 26, 2008

The governments of Japan and the U.S. held a meeting in Geneva and agreed to set up a new patent system. Under the new system, if a company files patent applications with Japan and the U.S., the two countries will complete screening them and grant patents to the

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company nearly simultaneously. The Japanese Patent Office and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office will share information about the contents and progress in screening of the applications in starting screening applications. The two governments plan to introduce the new system in some areas starting this fall on a trial basis and to increase areas applicable for the system next year.

Among leading companies that are accelerating globalization, there are many cases in which patent applications are filed in more than one country. But countries have used different standards for screening, and their speeds are also different. If the new system works successfully, other countries might begin to introduce a similar system.

In order to share information on screening in advance, the Patent Office and the Patent and Trademark Office will connect their systems. The two countries will also coordinate the scope and definition of patents in the future to facilitate the screening of applications.

SCHIEFFER